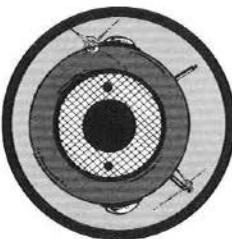


# AQUA NET ZINE

AN ALL QUEER A/PI PRODUCTION  
VOL. 1 ISSUE 2

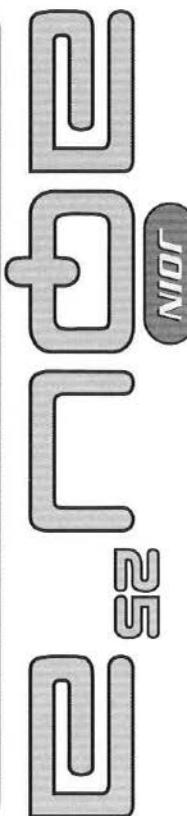
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# A Q U <sup>25</sup> A

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for and run by  
young queer and questioning  
people of Asian and Pacific Islander descent.*

*We  
are committed to  
creating a safe space where  
we can examine issues that are  
important to us,  
have fun, and  
support each other  
in exploring who we are.*

# *can you hear me?*

*I used to think that I had the power to change people.  
But you, Oh how you once stopped my world from revolving.*

There was a time when I wanted to know you,  
to see you for you

Now all I have are the images of your eyes  
piercing my soul  
You don't see me  
You only look at me

I am not some foreign creature for you to sympathize with  
nor am I an object of your inquiry, I am me

So I'm telling you now, close your eyes and feel my soul  
I love, I hate, I laugh, I cry,  
I am fighting the questions in your eyes  
If all you do is look at me

then you better put your biases aside  
To see who I am is to know who you really are  
I will not deny myself of me

I know who I am, what I stand for, and why I'm here  
Do you?

by

JL



—Liz Stephens

# ***Cruising through suburbia***

*by Jonathan Teodoro*

He's such a houser thug  
with his sagging, baggy jeans  
black polo tucked in loosely  
baseball cap worn low to cover his eyes

Then out of the blue comes this "attitude" . . .

    . . . from the valley  
    . . . from the beach  
    . . . from the mall

Laughing from sarcasm and irony he grabs my hand  
Caressing and stroking my fingers, I lean on his shoulder as we cruise through  
suburbia in a gray corolla careful not to look "too gay" or even "gay" at all

But I don't care

His kisses are addictive . . .

    . . . I just can't have one,

Feeling his whiskers on my upper lip, I laugh in mid-inhale

We laugh together and he tells me not to make fun of him

I assure him I'm "J/K" as

    he grabs me gives me a big bear hug

We talk of

    mutual friends and mutual enemies  
    coming out and staying in  
    being vain and being butch



All the while holding hands as if it  
were/weren't  
the most  
sexual/sensual  
thing to do

I feel like I'm in high school  
back to a time when things were simple and unpoliticized  
back to a time when "seeing" someone didn't mean sex (not that it's bad!)

His small but firm and hard body  
begs to be felt  
and I  
comply . . .

He flinches  
I laugh  
He pouts  
I smiles  
We kiss  
-sigh!-  
cruising through suburbia  
never felt so good.

# Ask Miz Joanie

## *Queer Advice for Queer People*

Hey Miz Joanie:

I'm currently in a pretty serious monogamous realtionship with another woman and she likes to kiss and show affection in public. I'm just not comfortable with PDA but don't want to jeopardize our relationship. What should we do?

Sincerely,

Miss Modest Monogamist, Marin

Dear Triple M:

Comfort levels are different for everyone. However, if you are going along with the PDA (public displays of affection for those of you out there not in the know) and feeling self-concious, chances are it probably isn't feeling good for you and your girlfriend. Tell her you are more comfy in private. Especially in a committed realtionship, it should not be a confronting conversation

∞

Dear Miz Joanie:

I'm a young, inexperienced gay male in a new relationship. My lover wants to have oral sex but won't use a condom. All my friends say oral sex is safe sex, but I want to know what are the risks for HIV. What are my options?

Uncontrollably Concerned in Concord

Dear Uncontrollably Concerned: First off, your friends are wrong, oral sex does not mean safe sex. Although oral sex is a lot less risky than anal or vaginal sex, there is still a risk since bodily fluids are involved. Oral sex can be made safer if you avoid having him ejaculate in your mouth or swallowing his cum. You can also reduce the risk by not putting his dick head in your mouth, so as to not tear the skin. But, the safest way is to use a condom, or try mutual masturbation, it always works for me.

For more information call the AIDS-HIV Nightline at 1-800-273-AIDS.

∞

Miz Joanie:

I have a close male friend who has expressed his interest in me. I've always identified myself as a lesbian but recently have found myself attracted to him. Am I bi- or just confused?

Perplexed in Pacific Heights

Dear Perplexed: People were never meant to fit neatly into identity categories, including those dubbed lesbian, gay, and bisexual. These categories are necessary responses to our need to classify people but are never enough to capture the complicated ways in which people feel. It's good that you can recognize your attraction to females in a society that doesn't always condone homosexuality, so you should realize it is just as normal to be attracted to both sexes. Don't feel trapped by labels (labels are made for the vain!) and stereotypes. Act on how you feel.

∞

Dear Miz Joanie:

I'm a 20 year old Asian male but mostly attracted to white males. Recently, I've found that most white men attracted to me are much older. I'd like to meet someone closer to my own age but I'm

having a hard time finding one. Where can I go? What should I do?

Potato Queen from the Tenderloin

Dear Meat and Potatoes Man:

Sounds like you've been going to one too many bars or clubs. Try joining social clubs or support groups for your age group. Also, check out the SF Chronicle Pink Section in the Sunday paper that lists out special interest groups, anything from literary lectures to most major sports clubs. Try to meet people through networks of friends rather than cruising the bar scene. And remember, keep an open mind, there are plenty of other tasty cuisines besides meat and potatoes to sample.

*If you too would like to ask Miz Joanie:*



write

c/o LWP

1841 Market Street  
San Francisco, CA

94103

or

e-mail

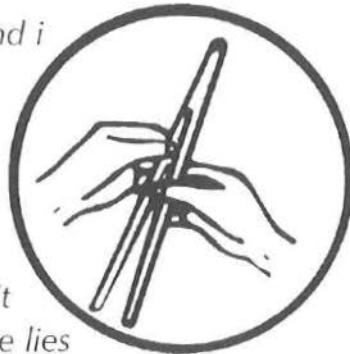
AQUAkid@  
ix.netcom.com

# Stop It! Neo-Orientalists

by Billy C.

as a first-time entry in this fabulously shiny 'zinemondo, i'll just rip out with some autobiographical stuff. why not, because, as my partners-in-the-production-of- scandalusness over at uc berkeley's cre (center for racial education) say, "self-made people always talk about their makers." (yahfta say it fast and good for it to be told right.) as a queer taiwanese/chinese/asian/american gay fe-male it ain't just all scandalus self-reverence, but as dodo-lores and michellaaaa at school say, it's necessary self-referentiality. (and i mean survival-strategies of political/social/psychical empowerment, o-kaay?) cause it's not like we get to be all talking about ourselves the way we wanna be talked about and have people read and hear it every day in the u.s., especially since we're young and queer and asians who continue to be actively disempowered in mainstream "heterosexicentric" media and culture and actively re-disempowered yet again dammit in subversive white gay and largely male media and culture.

while we're talking about these things, (and i know it's in the snaffu inaccessible language of theory, but as people with identities that are largely disadvantaged in u.s. society and culture, we need to start wakin' up and stepping to the rhythm of theory, and especially stop being intimidated by the word "theory" by translating it into what it really is-- a way of stepping out of the lies



that are the self-enforced boundaries of our lives, like femininity, masculinity, heterosexuality, being a bottom, being a stone butch, being a sultry femme, 1996 capitalism, etc., and really being able to critique those imaginary chains and resist/expand them, if not at least to understand ourselves better in order to make affirmative "living well" changes to our sucky lives. again folks, theory seems to be a way to get the hell outta the identity politics that we hate to have to love all the time, ok?)- while we're talking about these things, i can link these questions of media and culture to my next autobiographical point, which is: as a gay asian male living in the san francisco bay area, which houses horrible people like international wavelength, passport magazine, and "pacific friends" (they have "pool" parties every month, and no clothes required, and let me tell you, they look like they been sittin in that pool all their lives), all of which try by repetitive imagery and words to make happen to gay asians what still continues to happen in similar repetition in the mainstream to out and closeted asian/pacific islander women-- telling them and others that they are submissive, powerless, obedient to oppressive power, ready to sexually service the dominant strong white man. all of this, which is totally part of a systematic institutional project conceived in the 19th century by europe's political, educational, and social institutions--a project called, of course, "orientalism." europe's project of "orientalism" was a way for it to define itself in relation to what it had just encountered and what it did not understand (its cultural and geographical "other"), which turns out to be most of asia including where most of us today come from-- the pacific islands (like guamania and hawai'i), the phillipines, thailand, vietnam, korea, etc. european orientalists systematically defined us as being powerless, savage, inarticulate, submissive, obedient, dependents, etc., in



order to say that they themselves were powerful, advanced, dominant, civilized, and in control of their lives. so, turning right back around, the point is that this repetitive production of "oriental" identities obedient to western power through words and visual images actually makes people believe in them, translating into the historical orientalist oppression of asian/pacific islander women that continues to persist in contemporary advanced mainstream culture and society. This repetitive orientalization of women is now occurring in similar, but not ever identical, ways in white gay male culture and society, with the neo-orientalism that is targeting and totally disempowering gay asian men in similar ways. well all i can say is stop it! don't be lookin' at me all scandlus when i open my mouth and be loud and crass with my language, and don't be expecting me to let you do whateverthehell you want to me in bed or some shit, and don't be comin' up to me bein' all "ooo! i like you! you talk a lot and speak your mind! oo! oo!" i swear it happens to me all the time, and by people of all races and ethnicities. queer neo-orientalism tries to make us unable to be assertive in important negotiations that occur in relationships, including sexual practices that are so central in hiv/aids prevention.

anyway, i guess my self-referential journey through the messy ways that my mind and its relation to language works, is to me more of a thing with queer a/pi community self-referentiality. i hope my messy drawing



out of my relation to a/pi women, orientalism, and neo-orientalism, made some kind of sense, but i guess my last remarks would be to urge us as a community to therefore understand that the project of feminist movement is imperative to the freeing of our identities from such (self-/other-) enforced disempowerment. a/pi queer men need to embrace feminist movement.



Liz Stephens—

## *Sincerely Yours*

Dear Father,

How You cannot see  
That the one son you've disowned  
Is the same person as me  
How quick was your protest, how sharp was your voice  
As if it was I who had made this choice  
What pain I felt when you lifted your hand  
What must I do to make you understand  
That all my life I've given you respect  
Now I ask the same from you, this is all i expect  
But you continue up to this very day  
To take the love I've offered and push it away.

Dear Mother,

How your suspicious have grown  
That something was different, that you've always known  
How quickly you denied, how fast you masked your face  
As if the truth about me brought you disgrace  
And now you hide your doubts and play this charade  
Thinking what others might think behind this  
masquerade  
What must I do to stop the blame  
What have I done that has brought so much shame  
All your life you've allowed yourself to be deceived  
This is who I am, please mother, believe.

Dear Friend,

How distant we've become  
That the secret I've shared has left you numb

How quickly you judged, how fast you parted  
Leaving me in solitude, torn and broken-hearted  
Once there was a time when you stood by my side  
And now every time we meet you vanish and hide  
I know when you look at me your eyes see  
something strange  
How can I show you that nothing has changed  
All your life you've regarded me as your brother  
Now you turn away as if I was some other

Father, Mother, and my dear friend,

Would it even matter what happens in the end  
If I told you now that I'm all alone  
Would you even care that I'm on my own  
What price must I pay to make you think twice  
To regain your acceptance, what must I sacrifice  
I am what I am and that is all I can be  
I live how I live because that has always been me  
In this world it's simply give and take  
I give you my love, you grab and forsake  
But maybe one day you'll open your eyes  
Maybe one morning you finally realize  
To forgive and forget is the lesson to learn  
Have both arms open and wait for my return

Until then I'll remain Sincerely Yours,  
P.S. leave a light on by the door.

H.V.

## Fun in the Sun

### the unforgettable trip to Santa Cruz

This was AQUA's first field trip outside the Bay Area and it certainly was an interesting and unforgettable trip. The sky was blue and the ocean was cold, but we all managed to have a great time feeding, playing, and gossiping about the world.

It all started at about 10 a.m. when we met outside Living Well Project on March 10th. There, we introduced ourselves and divided into three groups: one would ride in the rental van (aqua marine color) and the others would ride in the two cars that would tail us to the Santa Cruz Boardwalk.

First, we had all the boys packed into the van while the girls were to be in the two cars. Jenn, outspokenly, complained that it was unfair because this would separate the genders, an all boys van and all girls cars. We all laughed and agreed that we should trade some passengers.

We wound up with seven people in the van: Steven was the designated driver; Doug, Living Well Project Youth Coordinator, sat shotgun; Montgomery and I piled into the middle row of seats; Curtis, Jenn, and James packed into the last row. In the first car to follow, Jennifer drove with Bobbi sitting shotgun and Cindy, Albert and Kent in the rear. Last was the little two-seater which Eva drove with Tina beside her.

Despite her complaints, Jenn ended up being the only female in the van. She candidly warned us boys not to "de-dyke" her. We all laughed since we knew that she would not let a bunch of queer boys change her orientation.

On the trip to the beach, there were many interesting conversations that arose from the people in the van. We laughed at the crazy drivers that had to follow us down the freeway. James stated that we should have posted a banner on our vans with many pink triangles to signify our sexual identity. In the back of the van, we were much too busy talking about flirting and sharing the "cheese-iest" pick-up lines that we had heard from the bars or while parading down Castro. Doug and Steven just quietly smiled not minding the silly conversations that arose from the back rows.

Time passed quickly and we were all bubbly with smiles and laughter as we pulled into the city of Santa Cruz. We parked along a small street and emptied out our pockets looking for quarters to feed the meters. Then we proceeded to the main stretch that lead down to the pier.

None of us had had anything to eat that morning, so come lunch time, we were all very hungry. We trekked back and forth, up and down the pier, hunting for a half way decent restaurant with reasonable prices. We finally settled on Gilda's, a small fish and chips place with fair prices.

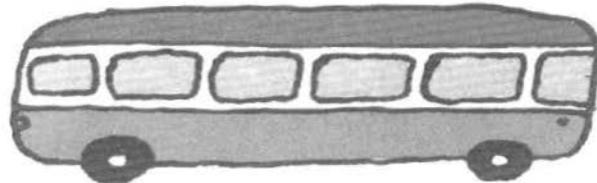
After lunch, we casually strolled down the beach and played (or pretended to play) volleyball. Some really got into the games while others decided to walk further down the beach and boardwalk. We warmed to each other, joking around and playing different games. We shared salt water taffy and iced cold drinks. We enjoyed ourselves 'til we ran out of quarters and it was time to go home.

The day, however, ended differently than we had anticipated as Eva had forgotten to turn off the lights on her car and its battery went dead. Jennifer took charge and started to flag down cars asking for jumper cables. We all pitched in, making signs and waving at passing cars hoping for someone who could help us. It took a while, but Jenn finally found a local resident who was willing to help us out.

But, that was not the worst of our problems as no one knew how to use the jumper cables or where the battery was in that sporty little two-seater. So, there we were fourteen queer youth gathered 'round a little car searching for a battery and trying to connect cables. But, we did finally succeed by 7:30 p.m. It was late and we were all very tired and not looking forward to the trip home. Some of us were concerned about getting home at reasonable hours. Still, we all managed to get home before nine.

In all, it was a wonderful trip. We all made new friends and managed to learn a bit about ourselves and others. The many things that we all shared during the day caused us to understand and appreciate one another a lot more. And in this process, we also learned a bit more about who we are as a community, and how to give support to our generation.

Nicholas D.





**As your anticipation grows!  
"You ain't seen nothin' yet!"**

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# Bluntly My Life

by lexis

Here lies a synopsis of excruciating memories turned into sarcastic folly.

I was an adopted little girl, dubbed the “Asian tomboy.” Because I was repeatedly mistaken for male I did not mind allowing sports to be an influential part of my life. During the teenage acne phase I found comfort draping myself in oversized solid colored attire from Russell’s Athletic Wear. These garments combined with my self-punishing weight gain plan successfully warded off all types of sexual advances. My personality was off beat. Politely, “I marched to the beat of my own drummer.” Emphasizing the parts of me that were melodramatic, withdrawn, and sarcastic, I shaped my personality. I had no choice. I was so mentally obese no wardrobe had a chance of furthering my popularity. By joining after school programs I benefited two ways. My lack of social graces were masked and college prospects furthered.

College held many profound and ridiculous memories.

I chose a small private college in upstate New York. I needed anonymity from every existing affiliation I had until this point in my life. I predicted this white suburban atmosphere would be the perfect cushion for my “coming out.” A rash decision. The process was painful. I was befriended by the co-chair of the GLBFN. He only looked to further his own self righteous egotistical political agenda. This was traumatic. I reacted by taking another road in life. I tried drugs with my alcohol. I liked them. I liked them a lot and became quite fond of pot. Combined with my heightened emotional inflated sexual identity crisis I became paranoid. Embarrassing as it may be, I made every Woody Allen character look as stable as Jackie Onassis. So then I tried another road. I tried hallucinogens. I liked them. Yeah, I liked them too. Whatever anyone was generous to give me I accept-

ed with thankful humble smiles and blasted off into the comfort zone.

Sophomore year I got really depressed and then fatter and fatter and fatter. Thank God I brought my Russell Athletics Wear to college. I was shamelessly tired of masturbating while craving interactive sex. The only fingers probing my body were mine when I dieted. However my diet/eating disorder was out of control yet effective in shedding the "Asian tomboy" image I fit and loathed. By junior year I finally looked decent by exercising no less than 2.5 hours and ingesting no more than 1000 calories daily. Fashion was now a serious subject.

The next phase of my life took place in the bars. Music, alcohol, lights, horny college students, and the loyal townies, were all thrown into the mix. In short, pieces of meat look and feel better under ultraviolet black-out lights and a few drinks.

Oddly enough, I grew sexually comfortable in this environment. My fellow bisexual, lesbian, gay, and the socially inadequate (that believed they identified with us), would get charged up to go to the one gay bar in Ithaca, New York. At The Common Ground we would cruise, dance, drink, flirt, gossip, be catty, and portray to all varying degrees the codes of conduct we believed were attached to this "lifestyle." The small dark arena, with cheap flicker lights, a disco ball, radio dance music (also sold via 800 number at 3 a.m.), located a few miles past the Jehovah's Witness compound, was dubbed "The Church." Pun intended, we went religiously. Ironically, we the patrons seemed to fit into the mix, while not giving a damn what other personality traits any of us had to offer.

Senior year I found an alternative...Rochester. The energy and women better suited my preferences. Rochester will always be sentimental and make me



smile for two reasons. I experienced my intoxicated debut/finale as a go-go dancer at Pandora's Box, from which I was rescued by the hot dog sales-woman. My second experience was being dumped via Internet. This second experience was a huge blow to my ego because I was dumped for a heavy set woman whom I believed was less attractive...with a perm.

Campus life was a saga. I grew comfortable with all the dozens of question and answer sessions my friends put me through. I thought a dorm floor symposium during senior year was not a big request. I was a little nervous. I thought it was best to down a few beers prior to my arrival so I could loosen up. The symposium went fine. While chatting with the lecture stragglers and my les/bi/ga/socially inadequate comrades I felt a little dizzy. My friend Greg was kind enough to catch me as I blacked out.

Proudly I graduated in four years with a Bachelor of Arts.

I went back to New York City.. and lived at home again...with my parents...only older.

I was the prodigal daughter for one year while working as a graphics intern. My bar floozy skills progressed and television did not seem so horrendous. My sister moved out the following summer. I intended on living there another year. Who knows? If my parents had not started the habit of keeping inventory of my whereabouts and the accumulating empty beer bottles then maybe I would have stayed to endure another year of regressing to my childhood.

I fled to San Francisco that same summer.

In San Francisco I kept a happy-go-lucky attitude only to meet a wide variety of tourists who left one week after becoming friendly. As for work, I am temping and have yet to state this without frowning. Stable ground is what I thought I wanted but I am also realizing I don't think I ever walked on it. So now I just think it is nice to stroll and check out the scenery without hesitation, reservation, or giving a shit.

For me, "coming out" can be interchanged with "growing up."

I cannot stop it and I ain't getting any younger.

**A HOROSCOPE  
OF  
FORTUNE COOKIE WISDOM**  
by Alby

**PISCES (Feb. 19–Mar. 19)**

No where to go? Have you been spending too much time primping yourself up for exciting, fun-filled Friday nights at home? Something big is coming your way, like an invitation to a party where strange (really strange) customs prevail. Be the animal you truly are.

**ARIES (Mar. 20–Apr. 19)**

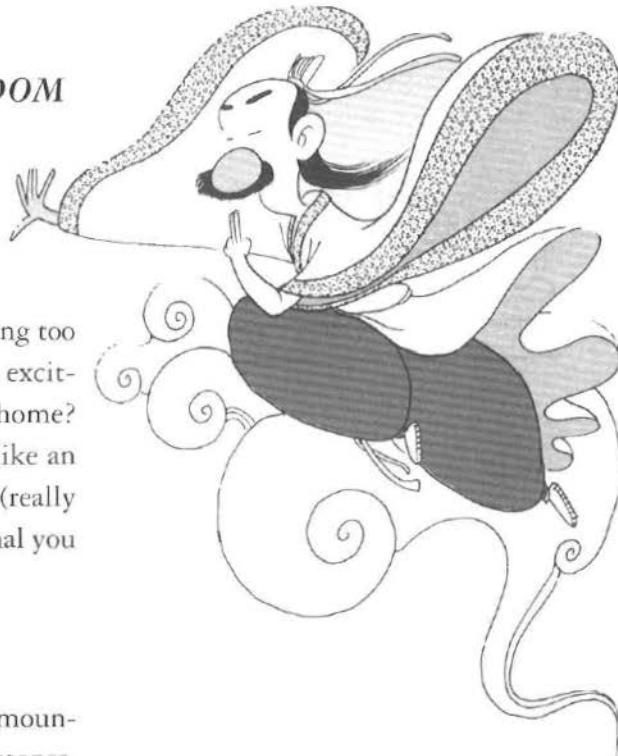
Remember! The man who removes a mountain begins by carrying away small stones. Don't get overwhelmed by all the work ahead of you. You will succeed.

**TAURUS (Apr. 20–May 20)**

Pssst...Someone is speaking well of you. From listening comes wisdom. Your friends and family—and a secret admirer—have a surprise for you.

**GEMINI (May 21–June 20)**

Don't let unexpected situations throw you.



Something difficult is ahead; family problems, a broken relationship, maybe even a zit! Pop that pimple before it gets obvious.

**CANCER (June 21–July 22)**

An Aquarius will bring you luck and happiness. Look out for a new friend with a beautiful smile.

**LEO (July 23–Aug. 22)**

Something tells me that you are seeking a soul

mate for a chilling adventure. Nobody can give you wiser advice than yourself, Leo, so take care that you don't use bad tips from your buzzy friends.

#### **VIRGO (Aug. 23–Sept. 22)**

O—My—God! What will happen to you this month may change your fate forever. Good news will come to you from far away. My advice: patience is the grandmomma of good fortune.

#### **LIBRA (Sept. 23–Oct. 22)**

Are you in a relationship slump? Break a bad habit like picking your teeth at dinner parties or exposing your plumber's butt every time you bend down. Do not worry – babes (male or female) will eventually come banging at your door.

#### **SCORPIO (Oct. 23–Nov. 21)**

Romance lurks just around the corner. Beware of a close friend whom you would never suspect. Perhaps he/she is "one of us" - you just don't know that yet!. Also, your lucky days are the 23rd and 27th. Wear a fragrance. Pick up an issue of Vogue and scrub your Asian/Pacific Islander body down!

#### **SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22–Dec. 21)**

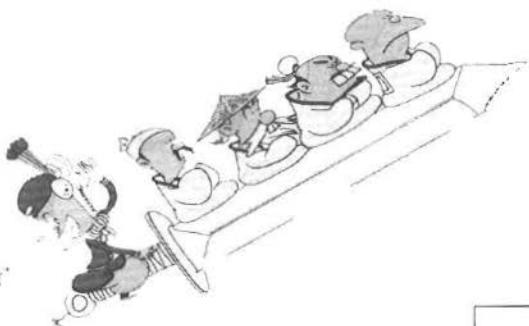
Make room for new ideas. After all, education's purpose is to replace an empty mind with an open one. Also, your spiritual health should be a top concern. Listen to yourself and think about who you are and how you can live happier and healthier.

#### **CAPRICORN (Dec. 22–Jan. 20)**

You are selfless and amiable. A family member will seek your advice. Don't hesitate to express your ideas. You command a lot of respect among your peers even if you haven't realized that by now.

#### **AQUARIUS (Jan. 21–Feb. 18)**

Renew a past sizzle or a current fizzle. Spontaneity is the key to your lover's heart. One word of advice to all you adventure seekers – Don't miss the Queer Carnival Dance sponsored by AQUA on March 30! May you find the lover of your dreams.



# w h e r e t o g o

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415/575-3939x362

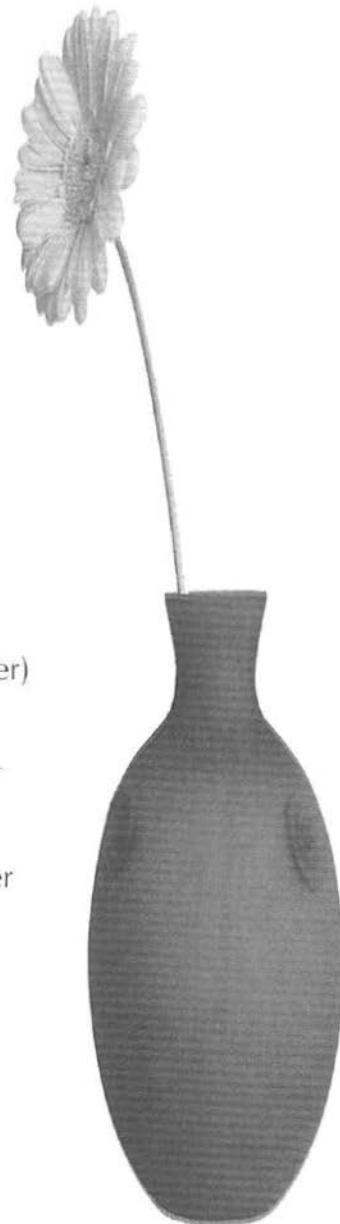
HIFY (Health Initiatives for Youth)  
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San Francisco, CA 94102  
415/487-5777

Bay+ (Bay Area Young Positives)  
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San Francisco, CA 94117  
415/487-1616

LYRIC  
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**& w h o t o c a l l**

GAPA (Gay Asian Pacific Alliance)  
P.O. Box 421884  
San Francisco, CA 94142-1884  
415/387-0466

APLBN (Asian & Pacific Islander Lesbian & Bisexual Women's Network)  
P.O. Box 460778  
San Francisco, CA 94146  
voice mail: 510/814-2422

Pacific Center  
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Walnut Creek, CA  
510/939-7711

Pacific Center for Human Growth  
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Berkeley, CA 94704  
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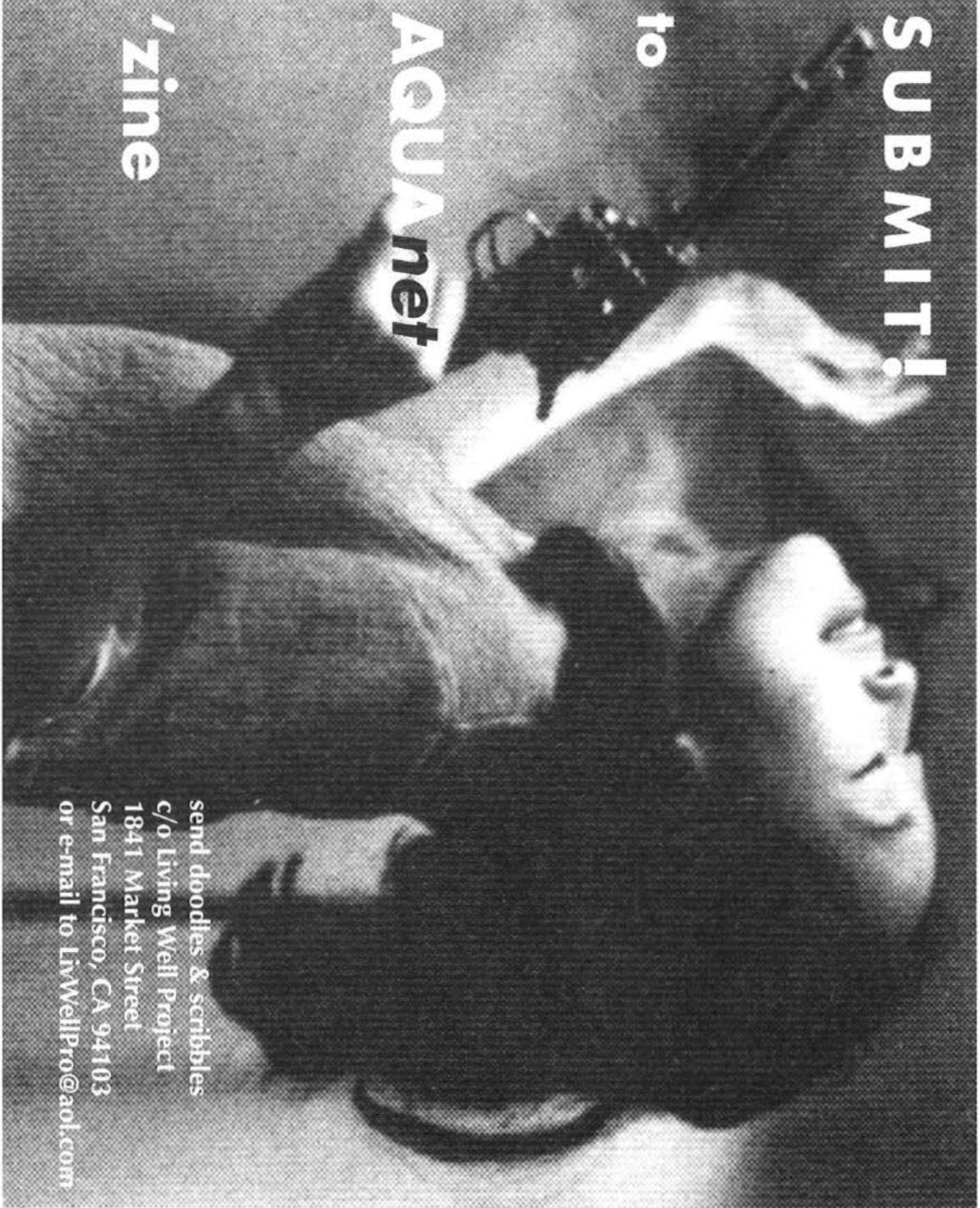
Who We Be...

S U B M I T !

to

AQUAnet

'zine



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## C O N T E N T S

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